

STATEMENT OF REP. GARY L. ACKERMAN
June 14, 2005
HEARING ON U.S. POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA

Thank you Mr. Chairman for scheduling today's hearing. With regard to India and Pakistan we have, I think, a tale of two policies: One new and visionary; another old and stale.

In the wake of Secretary Rice's visit to New Delhi a whole range of new possibilities has emerged to strengthen and deepen the ties between India and the United States. Close cooperation and technology sharing on civilian space launches and nuclear power as well as the possible purchase and even co-production of advanced fighter aircraft, are all things that a few years ago would have seemed unattainable, but are now within reach. It is a measure of how far we've come that the United States is offering the kind of cooperation and technology transfers usually reserved for our closest allies. And that is the biggest difference. Our entire strategic frame of reference has changed when it comes to thinking about India. We no longer see India through the lense of the Cold War as an ally of the former Soviet Union. Instead, we see India as important actor on the regional stage and as a nation poised to become a global power.

But in the case of Pakistan, no such vision exists. In Pakistan we have reverted to the old cold war paradigm of supporting any government, however unsavory, that at the moment supports us, and we have invested a great deal in a single man who overthrew an elected government in a coup, to ensure that support. But if ever there was a poster child for the President's "forward strategy of freedom", Pakistan is it.

Yet the President never even mentions Pakistan when he is talking about nations where democratic reform is the necessary antidote to extremism. One would think that in a country with a history of sectarian violence, military domination of politics and support for Kashmiri terrorist groups as proxies against India, the United States would be doing all that we could to encourage the development of strong democratic political institutions and moderate political parties. But we are not.

Every year the Congress authorizes the President to waive democracy related sanctions against Pakistan and every year the President finds he must exercise that authority. In return for our magnanimously setting aside our own laws, President Musharraf altered the Pakistani constitution, conducted a lopsided referendum on his own rule, marginalized the secular civilian political parties, institutionalized the role of the military in Pakistani politics, and reneged

on his promise to the Pakistani people and to us that he will resign his military commission.

For those who argue that we must support Musharraf or we'll wind up with Mullahs who have the bomb, I suggest that's a false choice and that our current policy of acquiescing in the marginalization of the moderate secular political parties could make it a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One might also think that in a country with not only a well documented inability to control its own most sensitive nuclear technology, but indeed a proactive effort to export it, the United States might be circumspect about providing Pakistan with our own military technology. But that's not the case. The Administration's announcement that the United States would license the sale of F-16s to Pakistan is only the latest in an ever escalating list of weapons systems that we seem only too happy to provide to Pakistan.

And what do we get for setting aside our democratic principles, our concerns about nuclear proliferation and showering Pakistan with military hardware? Why cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism!

But I think we should look closely at that cooperation, Mr. Chairman, because while Pakistan seems ready to arrest lots of al Qaeda operatives, they don't seem nearly as eager to clamp down on their own home grown terrorists.

Those Kashmiri Jihadis that the Pakistani military and intelligence services are so fond of using against India seem to operate with impunity.

Yes, some of these organizations have been banned but they simply re-emerge with the same leadership under different names. Cooperation in the war on terrorism must mean fighting all terrorists, al Qaeda and Pakistani extremist groups, not just the ones that are most convenient.

In the end, I'm left puzzling over what we are trying to achieve in our relationship with Pakistan and must conclude that Pakistan has become a management problem, meaning that this Administration just needs to keep it together long enough to hand off to the next.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.